



The Frostig Center FOCUS

Exceptional Children,
Exceptional Education

Issue 13, December 2020

COMMUNITY SPIRIT LIFTS FROSTIG SCHOOL

From Principal Jenny Tucker Mottes

When COVID-19 took hold in March, there were no textbooks to guide educators through the wrenching shift to remote learning, no webinars to tell us how to teach during a pandemic.

Our ability to navigate the pandemic depended on the dedication and ingenuity of our Frostig community. As we head into the holiday season, I want to reflect on the good people who lifted us up so our students could continue to learn and grow.

The success of our distance learning program begins with our teachers and their aides. They have built an online learning community that is engaging and responsive to the needs of each student. Our 98% student attendance rate is testament to their professionalism and compassion.

Parents picked up new responsibilities that came

with online learning, and still gave time and energy to Frostig. The Parents' Association lifted morale by organizing a drive-thru staff appreciation lunch and tireless moms stepped in to provide leadership to middle school lunch clubs, which are so important to the teens and tweens who crave social connection.

The Pasadena Public Health Department walked us through the arduous process of re-opening our campus to elementary students in October. School districts have been flexible and responsive to our needs throughout this pandemic, and foundations and individuals have stepped forward with grants and donations to help us meet the financial challenges posed by COVID-19.

I am grateful our community has helped us through this difficult time. I cannot predict how the rest of the school year will unfold, but I am certain we will continue to work together to deliver the highest quality education to our students. They deserve nothing less!



Add Some Drama to Your Life

Thanks to the imagination and generosity of our Frostig community, an endowment fund has been established to support the drama program at Frostig School.

Amy Brenneman and Brad Silberling, whose daughter Charlotte graduated in June, donated the lead gift in July in the form of a challenge grant. They were inspired to make their donation after watching Charlotte and classmates blossom on stage.

We are thrilled, but not surprised, to report that the Frostig community has responded generously to the challenge. Robert Jones and Julie Anne Robinson, parents of Edward and Thomas, were first to answer the call for contributions. Jackson and Annie Jeng, parents of Abigail, responded with the largest match to date.

All told, Frostig has received 16 gifts totaling \$35,100.



Brad Silberling and Amy Brenneman and their children

If your child or someone you know benefited from the drama program, please consider making a gift to the fund. To make a donation go to www.frostigschool.org/donate or contact [Yuki Jimbo](#).

The endowment fund will permanently support Frostig's drama program. Interest earned on the fund will be spun off each year to support student performances.

Alumni Spotlight

Hilary Hull Dix loves teaching first grade. She loves her students' curious minds. She loves seeing how much they learn in just one school year. And she loves sharing with them the lessons she learned as an elementary school student at Frostig School.

"My experience at Frostig has made me a better teacher," said Hilary, who works in a low-income school in San Jacinto in Riverside County.

"At Frostig there was an understanding that not everyone learns the same way," says Hilary. "So when I see a child isn't learning one way, it's natural for me to try another way. If I think a child is a kinesthetic learner, I try to provide them with something where they get up and move. If I think

a child is a visual learner, I try to accommodate that."

Hilary attended elementary school at Frostig and returned to her public school in La Canada-Flintridge for 5th grade in 2002. She is forever grateful that her parents recognized that her early struggles with reading were out of the ordinary and intervened early.



"I benefited from learning new techniques when I was very young," Hilary says. "It's tougher for older kids to change their ways."

"I never overcame my learning disability, but I learned how to work with it," says Hilary, who was

diagnosed with auditory processing disorder. "At Frostig I learned to be vocal, to be my own advocate. I also learned techniques that helped me cope with it. I was a good student in high school and college because I knew what I had to do to overcome a problem."

Hilary, who lives with her husband in the Temecula area, graduated from Northern Arizona University in 2014 with a dual degree in Special and Elementary Education. She feels she has found her calling teaching the "littles one." She dreams of going back to school to earn a master's degree in reading.

"I have fallen in love with reading, which is ironic because that is the one thing I couldn't do as a kid," Hilary says.

"I can never tell you how much Frostig impacted my life. I would not be here today teaching little minds if it wasn't for the school."

SAVE THE DATE

Frostig *School*

proudly presents

FALCON'S FLIGHT: SKY'S THE LIMIT!

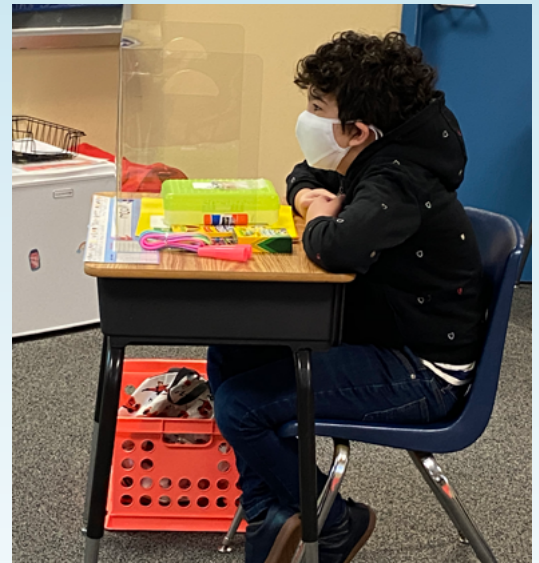
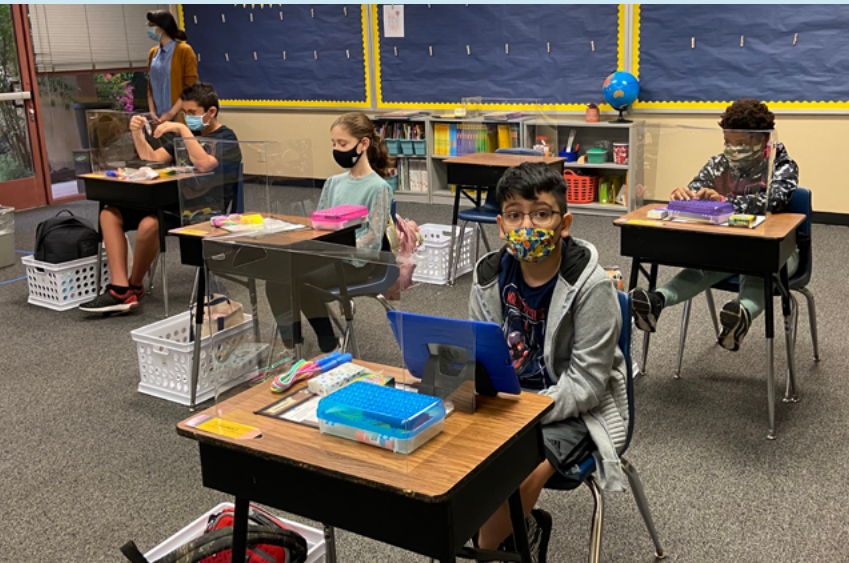
Please join us for a virtual fundraiser

**SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021
AT 7:00 PM**

For additional information, contact yuki@frostig.org

Back to Class!

Frostig School teachers and elementary school students were thrilled to return to their classrooms on October 22, after months of online learning. The students quickly adjusted to the new normal of social distancing, masks and temperature checks. They are eager, adaptable, resilient and otherwise simply amazing!



Father and Son Team Up for Frostig

Frostig School is grateful to parent David Marquez for donating his time and resources to produce and install acrylic desk dividers for every teacher, aide and clinician on campus.

David is vice president of SSI Surfaces Inc., which makes premium laboratory countertops, casework, and architectural wall panels. Frostig purchased the raw materials, SSI Surfaces donated the manufacturing costs, and David and his son, Connor, are overseeing production and installation.

David and Connor mounted the first panels in the elementary classrooms. They will eventually install 35 dividers as they work their way through 14 classrooms and 10 clinical offices.

“David and Connor have devoted a significant amount of time measuring, producing and installing the dividers,” Jenny said. “We are eternally grateful for their gift because the dividers will help prevent transmission of the coronavirus and keep our school community safe.”



David Marquez and son Connor

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Frostig Center is dedicated to helping children with learning disabilities reach their full potential through an integrated approach of research, professional development and consultation, and the Frostig School.



Follow our Facebook and Instagram to keep up with the latest news at Frostig

Read a Book or Listen to One? Brain Imaging Shows It's All Good

UC Berkeley News

Too busy or lazy to read Melville's *Moby Dick* or Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*? That's OK. Whether you read the classics, or listen to them instead, the same cognitive and emotional parts of the brain are likely to be stimulated.

UC Berkeley neuroscientists have created interactive maps that can predict where different categories of words activate the brain. Their latest map is focused on what happens in the brain when you read stories.

The findings, published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, have practical implications for learning and for speech disorders, from dyslexia to aphasia.

"At a time when more people are absorbing information via audiobooks, podcasts and even audio texts, our study shows that, whether they're listening to or reading the same materials, they are processing semantic information similarly," said study lead author Fatma Deniz, a postdoctoral researcher in neuroscience in the Gallant Lab at UC Berkeley.

For this latest brain mapping study, people listened to stories from a popular podcast series, and then read those same stories. Using functional MRI, researchers

scanned their brains in both the listening and reading conditions, compared their listening-versus-reading brain activity data, and found the maps they created from both datasets were virtually identical.

The results can be viewed in an interactive, 3D, color-coded map where words are grouped into categories.

The interactive 3D brain viewer is online at this link. <https://www.gallantlab.org/brainviewer/Deniz2019/>

Decoding the dyslexic brain

The semantic maps can inform interventions for dyslexia.

"If, in the future, we find that the dyslexic brain has rich semantic language representation when listening to an audiobook or other recording, that could bring more audio materials into the classroom," Deniz said.

The results of the reading experiment came as a surprise to Deniz.

"We knew that a few brain regions were activated similarly when you hear a word and read the same word, but I was not expecting such strong similarities," Deniz said.

With Gratitude

The Frostig Center is grateful to Pasadena Community Foundation for a \$10,000 grant that was used to purchase laptop computers for eight teachers.



Laptops are the essential tool for teachers during this time of distance learning. The new computers replaced aging models and ensured that all of our teachers have the technology they need to connect remotely with their students.

The grant was drawn from Pasadena Community Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund. The foundation has awarded more than \$2 million in pandemic relief to 120 local non-profit organizations.



Brain imaging shows that people process words similarly whether they read a book or listen to it.